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STATE FISH & WILDLIFE AREA

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA

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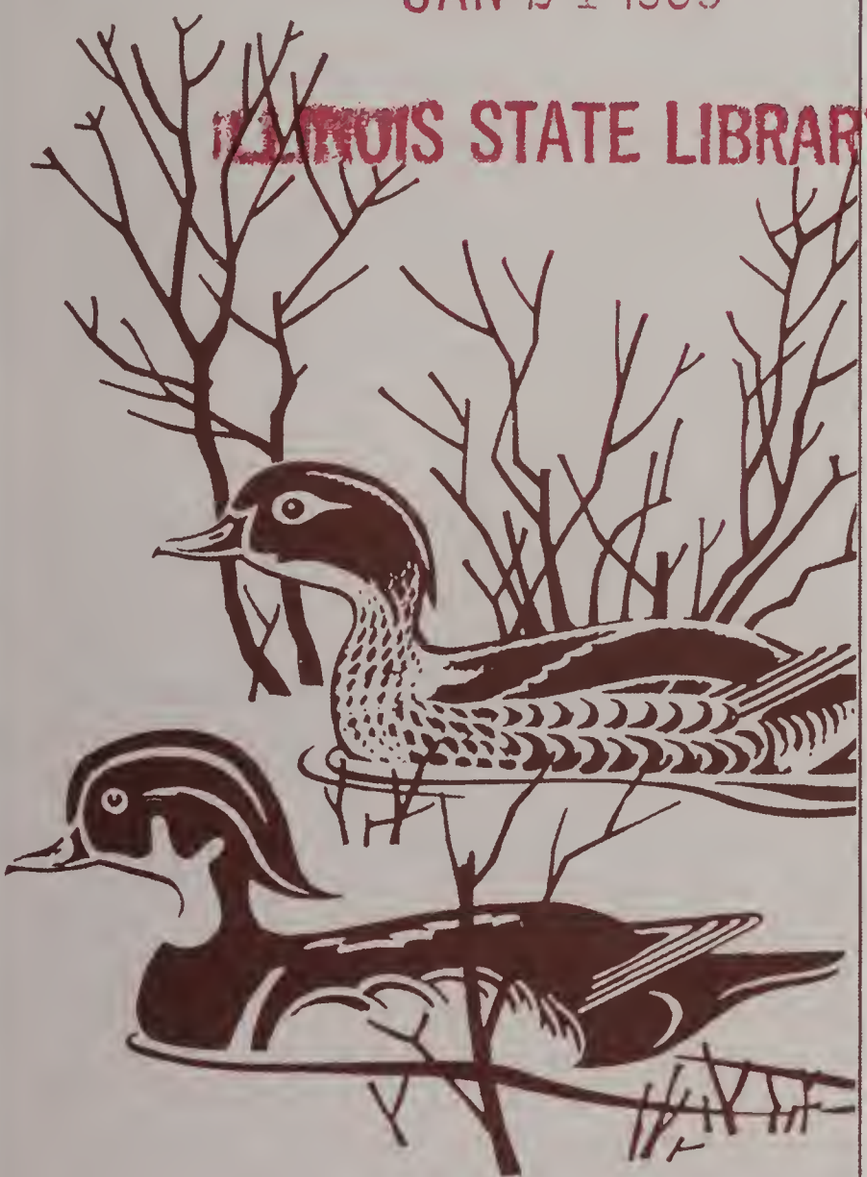

CONSERVATION

THE AREA

Marshall State Fish & Wildlife Area, located along nearly ten miles of scenic Illinois River backwaters, bottomlands, and bluffs, lies in the heart of the mallard duck flyway and supports a wide variety of animals, plants and outdoor pursuits.

With an initial land purchase in 1925, the area has grown to include approximately 6,000 acres, of which half is land and half water divided between three units.

The largest of these is the Marshall Unit, consisting of 3,000 acres east of the Illinois River and adjacent to Route 26. The area headquarters is found here, along with a small campground, boat ramp, fishing channel, hunter check station, and hiking trails. Terrain varies from ravine-cut bluffs to bottomland lakes, islands and sloughs.

The Spring Branch Unit contains 1,642 acres (537 acres of water) on the west side of the Illinois River between Sparland and Chillicothe. The unit falls in both Marshall and Peoria Counties. There is a 6-acre picnic area, fishing, and access to hunting and hiking trails adjacent to Route 29. The habitat ranges from upland forest to riverbottom to cropland.

The Sparland Unit, the smallest of the three, consists of 1,280 acres, of which 1,110 acres are water. Lying between Route 29 and the Illinois River, Sparland is predominatly used as a waterfowl hunting area, although at times fishing is quite popular. The backwater is very shallow and during low water boat access is difficult.

THE NATURAL SCENE

On the east side of Route 26 and the west side of Route 29 are high bluffs containing heavy hardwood timber of oaks, hickories and walnuts interspersed with wildflowers and shrubs. Wildlife includes red, gray and flying squirrels, whitetail deer, rabbits and other woodland species. Songbirds, owls, and hawks are common, particularly during migrations.

Bottomland forests and the backwater lakes comprise the majority of the area. Found here is a wide variety of fauna and flora. Cottonwood, silver maple and willow cover much of the low-lying land, including several large islands. River bullrush and other moist-soil plants thrive at the water's edge. Deer, raccoon, muskrat, mink and beaver find this habitat to their liking, and can sometimes be observed at dawn and dusk. A number of beaver dams dot the backwaters and these are good spots to wildlife watch.

While not as attractive to wildlife as they once were due to heavy siltation, the backwater lakes still attract large flights of waterfowl during migration. Only the brightly colored wood duck, common to the area, remains during the summer to nest and raise its young.

The tall and stately great blue heron also is found on the backwaters in large numbers: occasionally as many as 75 of these birds can be spotted fishing in the shallow waters at one time. And during winter it is not unusual to see bald eagles soaring above the frozen lakes or perched atop some snag.

FACILITIES

Picnicking — A day-use area with tables, shelters and stoves (no drinking water) is located in the Spring Branch Unit, two miles south of Sparland on Rt. 29. A smaller picnic area is found along Rt. 26, five miles south of Lacon, near the campground.

Camping — Tent and trailer spaces with electricity and water are available. Canoe camping is permitted on the islands except during waterfowl hunting season. Camping permits must be obtained.

Boating — The site provides boat docks, a free launching ramp, and state-owned rental boats. There is no horsepower limit.

Fishing — All fishing is done on the Illinois River and its backwaters. Bluegill, crappie, bullhead and channel catfish are the most frequently caught fish. More experienced anglers can catch largemouth bass. A man-made half-mile-long channel near the campground is popular for fishing.

Hunting — Upland and forest game hunting opportunities exist in designated wildlife management areas. Shotguns and bow and arrow are permitted and there is no hunting in recreation areas. Waterfowl hunting is available by permit and is restricted to designated blind sites. A hunting fact sheet is available by mail or at site office.

Trails — A marked, 3.5 mile combination hiking, cross-country ski and hunter access trail is available for public use. Please contact the site for trail brochure.

Winter Sports — Cross-country skiing, backpacking and ice-fishing is permitted on the frozen backwaters after the conclusion of waterfowl hunting season. The 3.5 mile trail takes skiers through wooded bluffs.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

For more details about this site contact: Marshall State Fish & Wildlife Area, R.R. 1, Box 238, Lacon, IL 61540, phone (309) 246-8351. For information on other recreation areas, contact the Illinois Department of Conservation, Bureau of Public Lands, 524 S. Second St., Springfield, IL 62706.

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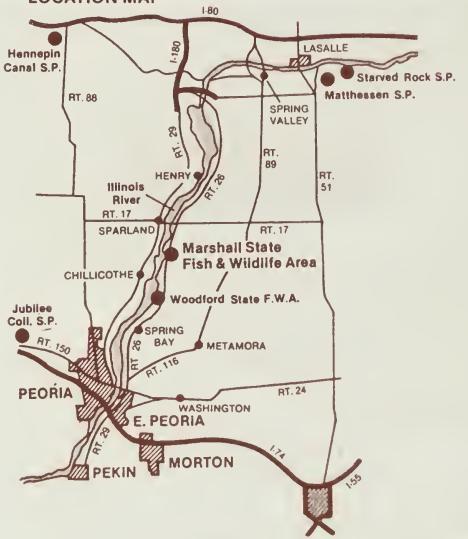
LOCATION MAP



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CHILLICOTHE
ROUTE 29
PEORIA COUNTY | MARSHALL COUNTY
Railroad
and Santa Fe
MEADOW LAKE
SPRING BRANCH UNIT
Parking Lots
Picnic Area
ROUTE 17
Sparland
Sparland Access & Parking
ILLINOIS RIVER
ROUTE 29
BABB SLOUGH
Wightman Lake
CAMERON NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
ROUTE 26
TO SPRING BAY
SAWYER SLOUGH
Bridge
MARSHALL UNIT
GOOSE LAKE SPARLAND UNIT
HENRY, IL
AICHISON WATERFOWL REFUGE
Parking Lots
State Owned Boundries
HEADQUARTERS
Atchison Topeka
ROUTE 26
Public Boat Ramp
LACON
WEIS LAKE
ROUTE 26
BILLSBACH LAKE

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SCALE:
.6" = 1 Mile

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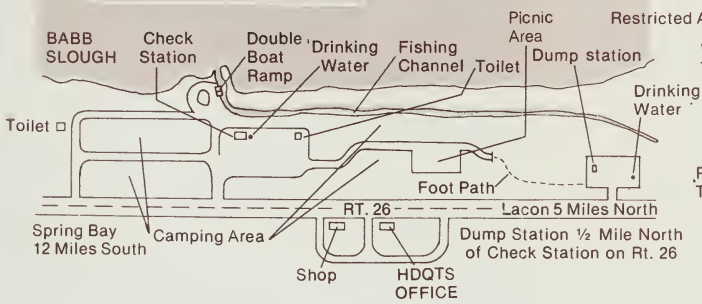
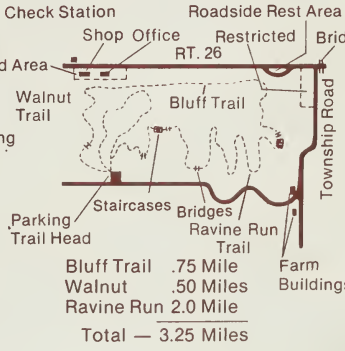
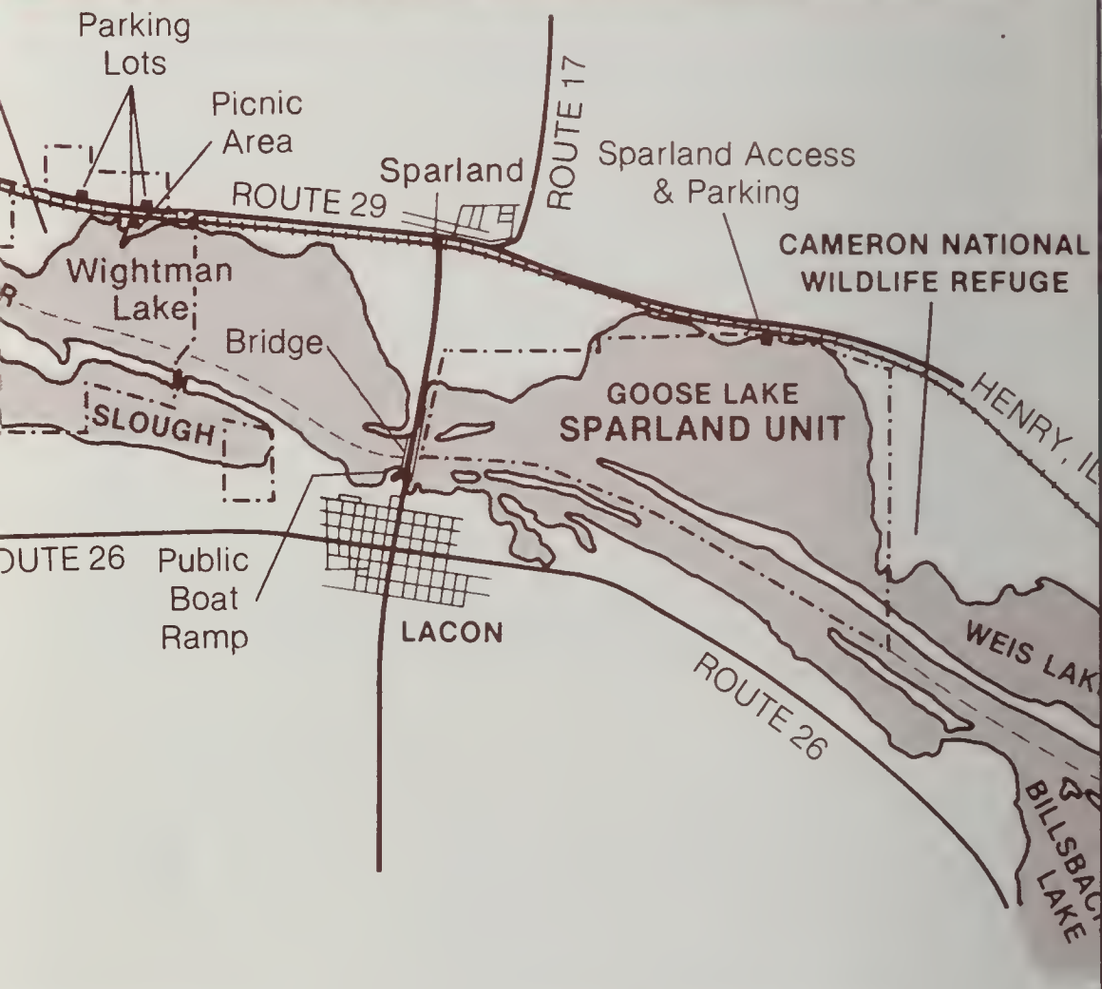


TRAIL LOCATION



Bluff Trail	.75 Mile
Walnut	.50 Miles
Ravine Run	2.0 Mile
Total —	3.25 Miles



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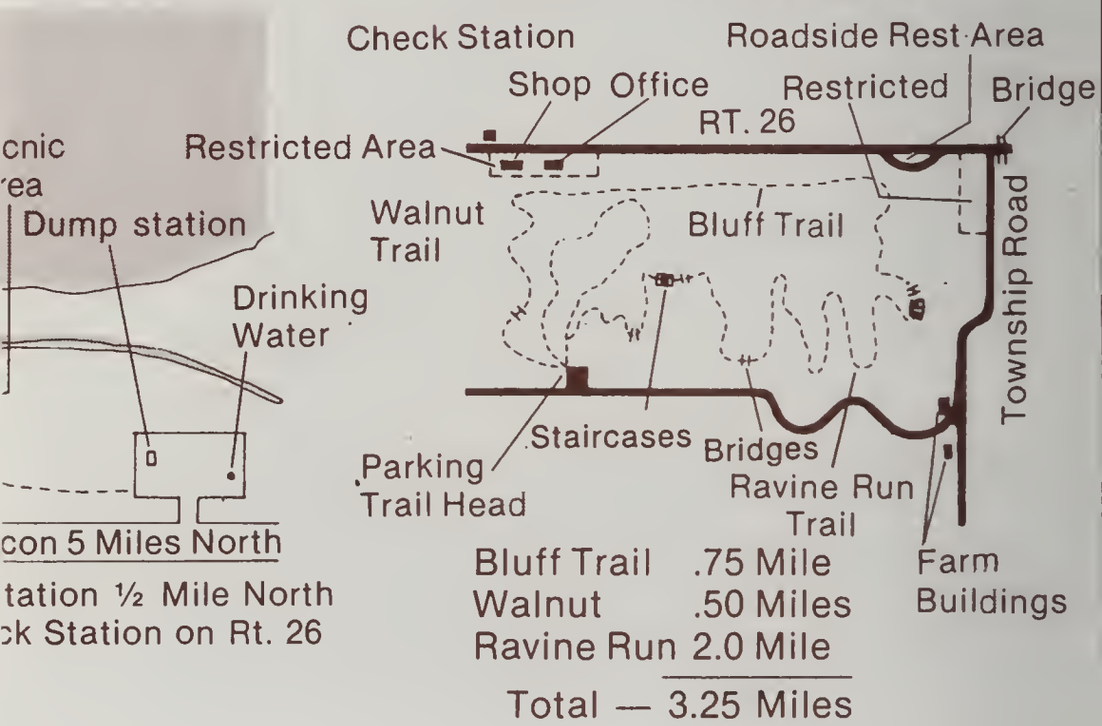

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